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E.O. 12958: DECL: AFTER KOREAN REUNIFICATION  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MNUC](#) [EAID](#) [KN](#) [KS](#)  
SUBJECT: MINISTRY OF UNIFICATION ON APRIL 21-24  
INTER-KOREAN MINISTERIAL

REF: SEOUL 1322

Classified By: DCM Mark C. Minton. Reasons 1.4 (b, d).

SUMMARY  
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1. (C) In an April 26 read-out of the April 21-24 inter-Korean ministerial in Pyongyang, Assistant Minister for Unification Policy and Public Affairs Lee Kwan-sei emphasized to the DCM the extensive effort Seoul made on persuading the DPRK to return to the Six Party Talks and to engage the international community proactively on human rights. The ROK had long and difficult discussions with the DPRK on the issue of abductees and POWs and viewed the inclusion of that issue in the joint press statement as a great success. Lee said the DPRK had "agreed in principle" to former President Kim Dae-jung's proposed June visit to the DPRK, with details to be worked out in working-level meetings. He flatly denied there was any discussion between the two Koreas on the possibility of a second inter-Korean summit. Lee confirmed that Seoul agreed to provide Pyongyang 200,000 additional tons of fertilizer, but denied press reports of any discussion on rice assistance. Lee also expressed satisfaction that the ROKG had deflected all of the DPRK's unhelpful suggestions for inclusion in the joint press statement. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) The DCM on April 26 received a briefing on the April 21-24 inter-Korean ministerial in Pyongyang from Lee Kwan-sei, Assistant Minister for Unification Policy and Public Affairs. Lee, who had traveled to Pyongyang as a member of the ROK delegation, said the general atmospherics of the talks were neither confrontational nor awkward, which was a pleasant surprise given the generally unfavorable external environment, such as the lack of progress in the Six Party Talks.

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON ROK'S PROPOSAL FOR PEACE, COOPERATION  
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3. (C) Lee stated that South Korea's primary objective for this round of talks was to persuade the DPRK to agree on three basic steps for institutionalizing peace and cooperation between the two Koreas: resolving the DPRK nuclear issue; establishing the basis for peace in the Korean Peninsula by easing military tension and expanding

inter-Korean economic cooperation; and, increasing cooperation on humanitarian issues. The two sides were able to reach general agreement -- in principle -- on these steps per the joint press statement (see full text of the press statement in para 11).

GREAT DEAL OF TIME DEVOTED TO NUCLEAR ISSUE, HUMAN RIGHTS  
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14. (C) According to Lee, the ROK explained at great length that it was in the North's national interest to return to the Six Party Talks as soon as possible and engage sincerely with the other parties on the steps for implementing the September 19 joint statement of principles. The South Koreans also discussed human rights with their North Korean counterparts, stressing the importance of addressing the concerns of the international community and engaging in serious dialogue with other countries, including the ROK, on improving the conditions in the DPRK.

"SUCCESSFULLY" INCLUDED ABDOES IN JOINT PRESS STATEMENT  
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15. (C) On the issue of South Korean abductees and POWs, Lee said the ROK delegation had long, difficult discussions with the North Koreans on practical steps to determine the welfare and whereabouts of these individuals. Considering the difficulty in persuading the DPRK on this issue, the ROK regarded the inclusion of an anodyne agreement on this issue in the joint press statement as a great success, Lee added.

NO NEGATIVE REACTION TO MEGUMI YOKOTA'S ABDUCTEE SPOUSE  
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16. (C) Lee said the ROK had also raised the recent revelation that Japanese abductee Megumi Yokota's spouse was Kim Young-nam, a South Korean abductee. Much to the South Korean delegation's surprise, the DPRK had not reacted negatively to the ROK's call for Pyongyang to provide more information on this case. Rather, the North Koreans responded that relevant authorities were in the process of investigating the issue. The ROK, therefore, planned to seek further cooperation from the DPRK on resolving Kim's case.

DJ VISIT, NO MEETING W/KJI, NO TALK OF 2ND SUMMIT  
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17. (C) On the issue of former President Kim Dae-jung's proposed June visit to the DPRK, Lee reported that the DPRK had agreed in principle to discuss the agenda, the size of Kim's delegation and other details of the visit in working-level discussions to be held "soon." (NOTE: Dr. Park Chan-bong, Standing Delegate to North-South Dialogue, Ministry of Unification, told POL M/C in an April 25 meeting that the ROK "had understood that former President Kim would visit Pyongyang in June" from its dialogue with the DPRK. He carefully sidestepped the issue of whether the DPRK had explicitly agreed to host Kim, however. END NOTE.)

18. (C) Lee reaffirmed that, per earlier preview (reftel), the ROK did not raise the issue of a second inter-Korean summit. The DPRK, likewise, did not bring it up. Responding to the DCM's query, Lee acknowledged press reports that the ROK delegation had requested that Minister of Unification Lee Jong-seok be granted an audience with Kim Jong-il. According to Lee, the DPRK responded that Kim was unavailable because he was visiting one of the provinces.

AGREEMENT ON FERTILIZER AID, BUT NO DISCUSSION ON RICE  
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19. (C) Responding to the DCM's query, Lee confirmed press reports that the DPRK had requested 300,000 tons in fertilizer assistance in addition to the 150,000 tons supplied by the ROK earlier in the year. The ROK agreed to provide the North 200,000 more tons but would hold off on the remaining 100,000 tons pending "internal review." Lee, however, flatly denied press reports of a DPRK request for

rice assistance, stating that the two sides had not discussed the issue. (NOTE: In a separate April 26 briefing for the diplomatic community in Seoul, Nam Gwan-pyo, Director General for Policy Planning, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, said the ROKG "had made no decision on rice assistance to the DPRK" in response to a question from the audience. END NOTE.)

DPRK'S MAIN DEMANDS NOT REFLECTED IN STATEMENT  
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¶10. (C) Lee noted that the joint press statement did not contain any of the DPRK's stated demands from its opening remarks, such as the halt to all U.S.-ROK joint military exercises, permission from Seoul for South Koreans to pay respects to Kim Il-sung at memorial sites in the DPRK, and joint North-South efforts to resolve the longstanding dispute with Japan over the Dokdo islets. There was also no specific discussion on the Kaesong Industrial Complex, although the two Koreas would likely discuss the project in the Economic Cooperation Promotion Committee meeting in May. According to Lee, the DPRK showed great interest in the ROK's proposals for the joint usage of the Han River estuary and projects for developing North Korea's natural resources. Lee added that the ROK requested that the DPRK tone down negative remarks about the opposition Grand National Party (GNP) in its official rhetoric.

¶11. (U) The full text of the joint press statement follows (ROKG translation):

The 18th inter-Korean ministerial was held in Pyongyang on April 21-24.

During the meeting, the two sides agreed to make positive efforts to elevate bilateral relations to a level befitting the spirit of the Korean people's unity as well as assess achievements made following the joint declaration of the June

15 summit. The agreement is as follows:

¶1. South and North Korea agreed to promote the Korean people's reconciliation and trust by taking practical measures to recognize and respect each other's ideology and system in line with the June 15 (2000) North-South joint declaration.

¶2. South and North Korea shared the need to take practical measures to ease military tension and ensure peace on the Korean Peninsula and agreed to cooperate in their implementation.

¶3. South and North Korea agreed to make positive efforts to implement the September 19 joint statement of principles in order to resolve the nuclear issue in a peaceful manner in ways that benefit the interest and security of the Korean people, as well as continue to make efforts to realize the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

¶4. South and North Korea agreed to hold a festival in the South to mark the sixth anniversary of the June 15 North-South joint declaration as part of efforts to promote the unity of the Korean people in a meaningful way through the participation of delegations from both Koreas in the festival.

¶5. South and North Korea agreed to realize economic cooperation that can contribute to the Korean people's joint prosperity.

The two sides agreed to take practical measures of mutual benefit that can expand investment and cooperation in terms of region, business type and scale under the firm belief that inter-Korean economic cooperation is a cooperative business by the Korean people and for their joint prosperity.

In this regard, the two sides agreed to hold the 12th meeting of the inter-Korean economic cooperation promotion committee sometime in May to discuss ways of extracting aggregate in

the estuary of the Han River and jointly developing resources, as well as implementing trial runs of trains, the opening of railways and roads across the border and discussing the Kaesong Industrial Complex and cooperation on light industry and resources.

¶6. South and North Korea agreed to cooperate in resolving the issue of the people unaccounted for during or after the Korean War in a practical manner.

¶7. South and North Korea agreed to promote cooperation in such various projects as prevention of natural disasters, enhancement of health and preservation of cultural assets.

¶8. South and North Korea agreed to hold the 19th inter-Korean ministerial in Busan from July 11-14, 2006.  
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